

# Tracks

Summer 2002 • Free To Hunters and Anglers

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Issue #24

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*Cover: Mule deer buck at Tulelake National Wildlife Refuge.  
Photo by Willy Onarheim.*

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Summer 2002

# 2002 Deer Herd Forecast



by John Higley

**I**t's probably old news to most California big game hunters but deer hunting in this state isn't the same as it is in some other western states like Nevada, Colorado and so on. You can make a case that deer hunting is better on the other side of the border but actually it's simply different. Truth be known, California has much more variety both in habitat and the deer that utilize it. Six subspecies of mule deer are recognized in California including Rocky Mountain mule deer, California mule deer, Inyo mule deer, burro mule deer, southern mule deer and Columbian black-tailed deer. Here's where the different subspecies are found:

**Columbian Black-Tailed Deer:** Unquestionably the most numerous deer in the state, blacktail deer range throughout the coastal mountains roughly from Santa Barbara north to Oregon and from Calaveras County north along the west slope of the Cascade-Sierra Nevada range. Where blacktail deer intermingle with Rocky Mountain mule deer (in the eastern most portion of their range) the two subspecies interbreed readily.

**Rocky Mountain Mule Deer:** These deer range throughout much of the West and spill over into California in Modoc, Lassen, Siskiyou and Shasta counties. Their range extends south along the east slope of the Cascade-Sierra chain to southern Mono County. Rocky Mountain mule deer are the third most abundant deer in the state and the biggest bodied of all.

**California Mule Deer:** Second in abundance only to blacktail deer, California mule deer are found along the west slope of the Sierra Nevada from Sierra County south to Kern County. They are also found in various places from northern Orange County to San Benito and Monterey counties as well as in the San Gabriel, San Bernardino and Tehachapi mountains.

**Southern Mule Deer:** These deer reside in San Diego, Orange and western Riverside counties.

**Inyo Mule Deer:** This subspecies occupies portions of Inyo, southern Mono and northeastern Kern counties.

**Burro Mule Deer:** Not numerous, perhaps, burro deer are found scattered in the southeastern deserts of San Bernardino, Riverside and Imperial counties. They are present on both the California and Arizona sides of the Colorado River.

Obviously, there are deer of one subspecies or another in many places throughout the Golden State. In fact, it's estimated that deer reside on 56 percent of the land base, meaning approximately 88,000 square miles of habitat. How can you find one buck to tie your tag to when the 2002 seasons begin? Good question, and the honest answer is you definitely have your work cut out for you.

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Those hunters that get their bucks on a regular basis, on public land especially, generally have things figured out only after years of trying and learning. There are exceptions, of course, but successful hunters are normally quite familiar with the areas they hunt. If they do go someplace new they spend enough time on site to learn something about the zone and especially to locate some deer hang-outs.

Along that line, here is a question to ask yourself about the deer zone or zones for which you have a tag. Are the deer resident animals or are they migratory? If the animals utilize different habitat in the winter than in the summer, chances are good that you'll have to go high for them when the season opens because they'll still be on their summer range. Later, if there's a weather event that starts the migration to winter range, you'll have to adjust and hunt at lower elevations. What you need to do is recognize the situation as it changes and learn how to access the habitat (by foot, vehicle or pack animal) where the deer are apt to be at a particular time.



Of course, weather events, or lack of them, always come into play in California deer hunting. A brief look back at past years reveals a trend for higher harvest across the board whenever fall storms arrive during the seasons. For example, during the mild falls of 1998, 1999 and 2001 the take, in sequence, was 32,747, 33,800 and 33,273 respectively. In 2000, however, the last year with notable storms while most seasons were still open, the harvest jumped to 39,062.

So what does all of this really mean? Well, for starters, it means that conditions really change very little from year to year and when the harvest does spike up or down it's usually due to natural phenomena. In other words, a forecast like this, while interesting to many hunters, can't be written in stone. Some years deer seem to be scarce most everywhere and some years are good enough to make you wonder where they were all hiding.

Today, deer herds in some areas seem to be stable or increasing slightly while other herds are in slow decline. To give you an idea of what's

going on with the deer in your hunting area, let's look briefly at the eleven Deer Assessment Units (DAUs) established by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) in the mid-1990s. Each DAU contains existing deer hunt zones with similar topography, climate and vegetation. Deer management strategies in these units will be based mostly on environmental and ecological factors within.

#### **North/South Central Coast (DAUs 1 & 2)**

This section includes the northern and southern portions of Zone A and Zone D13. It's estimated that hunters were successful in the A zone approximately 29 percent of the time in 2001 when the total take was 11,538. By contrast, in 2000 the take was 12,091. Meanwhile, in Zone D13, the take in 2001 was 317 and in 2000 it was 434. Even though the harvest declined a bit last year, the total deer population in the region, based on a three year average, was up from 192,800 in 2000 to 208,590 in 2001. Even allowing for a degree of error, it appears that the largely resident deer herds in DAUs 1 and 2 are stable or increasing.

This is a huge area and the tag quota for Zone A (65,000) has never been filled. The quota for Zone D13 is 4,000 tags. Incidentally, a lot of Zone A consists of private land but there is some public land in Colusa, Lake, Mendocino, Monterey, Napa, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Yolo counties. A percentage of Zone D13 is private land but there's also good access on public land.

#### **Northwestern California (DAU 3)**

This region takes in zones B1 through B6 and includes some of the most dependable deer hunting in the state. Just to confuse things a bit, Zone B4 was recently added to DAU 2, but for our purposes this year it will still be lumped with the other B zones. Speaking of Zone B4, it's mostly private land, whereas there's plenty of access on national forest

(continued)

*Rocky Mountain mule deer. DFG photo.*

lands throughout the rest of the region. The B zones tag quota is generous at 55,500 and there are always tags left over at season's end. Last year the total harvest in the B zones was 9,108 while in 2000 (a year of cool fall weather) the take was 11,365. Hunter success fell from 27 percent in 2000 to approximately 22 percent in warmer 2001.

The deer herds in the B zones are basically stable even with an apparent downturn in Siskiyou County. The estimated three-year average B zones deer population figure went down from 160,800 in 2000 to 157,600 in 2001.

All of the deer in the B zones are blacktails and many of them are migratory. Many hunters prefer to hunt wilderness areas such as the Trinity Alps, Marble Mountain and Yolla Bolly early in the season and lower elevation areas once the annual migration starts.

#### **Cascade/North Sierra (DAU 4)**

This DAU is comprised of the four C zones which stretch from the Oregon border south to Butte County in the central part of the state. The tag quota for the region is 11,500, all of which are normally sold before

the season opens each year. In addition to the four C zones, the results from late hunt G1, which takes place in Zone C4, will be included in the over all total. The take in 2001 was 2,481 and in 2000 it was 2,913, again reflecting the weather. The deer in the C zones are either blacktails or mule deer/blacktail crosses depending on where you are.

The deer population in DAU 4 is apparently continuing to decline, albeit slowly. In 2000 the estimate was 42,000 animals and in 2001 it was 38,142.

#### **Northeast California (DAU 9)**

This region consists of seven X zones including Zone X5b—site of the state's first regular season quota hunt in 1978. The other zones represented here are X1, X2, X3a, X3b, X4 and X5a. These zones remain popular with hunters even though deer numbers declined sharply during the severe winter of 1992-93. The animals still haven't recovered to their former numbers. In fact, a slight decline was recently seen in some areas and the overall population estimate for the zones in DAU 9 in 2001 was 22,799 while in 2000 it was 23,210.

Even though the deer population is down, hunter success, due to the nature of the terrain and the low tag quota, is relatively high, ranging from 21 percent in Zone X-1 to 54 percent in Zone X3b. Most of the deer in the eastern zones are Rocky Mountain mule deer with blacktail/Rocky Mountain mule deer hybrids occurring in Zone X1 and part of Zone X4.

The total harvest in these X zones for 2001 was 1,440; in 2000 the take was 1,695. Hunters fortunate enough to draw tags for these zones will find almost unlimited public land at their disposal.

#### **Northeast Sierra/East Sierra (DAUs 10 & 11)**

DAU 10 contains the northeast Sierra zones of X6a through X8 and DAU 11 takes in the zones south of Ebbetts Pass—X9a, X9b, X10 and X12. These zones experienced notable declines in the period from 1990 through 1996. However, based on the latest trend estimates, deer numbers appear to have stabilized or increased slightly. In DAU 10 the population estimate for 2000 was 7,220 and in 2001 it was 7,617. As for DAU 11, the estimates went from 11,000 in 2000 to 11,700 in 2001.

(continued)



*DFG file photo.*

DFG file photo.



The highest success last year was in zones X7a and X7b which hovered between 55 and 60 percent.

Most of the deer in these zones are migratory. Depending on weather conditions, that fact should be a foremost consideration.

#### **Central/Southern Sierra (DAUs 5 & 6)**

Estimated hunter success for combined zones D3, D4 and D5 (part of DAU 5) was 9 percent or a little more in 2001. One tag covers all three zones and the quota is 33,000. In 2000, the percentage of success was around 12 percent, again showing the effects of weather. The other zones in DAU 5 are D6 (10,000 tags) and D7 (9,000 tags) where the annual success rate generally falls between 8 and 11 percent. Even so, deer numbers appear to be climbing in DAU 5 and the estimate for 2001 was 91,347; in 2000 the figure was 83,700.

DAU 6 contains zones D8 (8,000 tags), D9 (2,000 tags) and D10 (700 tags) where deer populations are considered stable. The latest estimate for 2001 is 19,769; in 2000 it was 19,700. Historically, D zones are not known for high success rates and while hunter success was as high as 16 percent in Zone D10 in 2000 that rate fell back to 9 percent in 2001. Generally, fall storms are very helpful in DAU 6 as the animals become more accessible. In DAU 5, however, inclement weather can drive deer onto winter range on private land where public access is limited.

#### **South Coast/Desert (DAUs 7 & 8)**

The southern zones included in DAU 7 are D11, D14, D15, D16 and D19. The area extends from Los Angeles County to the Mexico border and east as far as Palm Springs. Hunter success went as high as 12 percent in D16 in 2000 and went back to a more normal 8 percent in 2001. In the other DAU 7 zones success stayed around 7 or 8 percent.

While that isn't high, the rugged hills of southern California have never provided red hot hunting, just an opportunity to get out in the most urbanized region of the state. A quick look at deer population estimates shows a slight downward trend in DAU 7 from 17,400 in 2000 to 16,537 in 2001.

DAU 8 is comprised of the arid southern desert zones of D12, D17 and X9c. The total tag quota for the three zones is 2,300 and the annual harvest usually varies from 7 to 11 percent. The total population estimate for these three zones in 2001 was 4,664; in 2000 it was 4,060. That seems like quite a jump but the official line is that deer numbers are stable. This is a vast area with few deer and restricted access to much

of the region which is designated national preserve or wilderness.

In this article you may have noticed the word "decline" more than once and for good reason. As we've seen, there are areas in the state where deer herds are below desired levels but there are also places where herds are stable or building. Despite the "d" word, any tag you have can open the door to some enjoyable hunting experiences. Whether you are successful or not will, as always, depend on several factors including how well you know an area, how much time you spend in the field, effort expended, weather conditions and, of course, luck.

Deer hunting in the Golden State may not be what it was in the 1960s but for those hunters who regularly put themselves in the right place at the right time it really can't get much better. The buck harvest in 2002 may be less than it was in 2001 but no one knows, yet, what 2002 will bring. When the next chapter is written perhaps your name will be at the top of the list of successful hunters.

*John Higley is a freelance writer and avid hunter.*

# The Spector of the 1956 California Doe Hunt

By Paul Wertz



*DFG warden validating deer tag, circa 1957. File photo.*

During the notorious pair of three-day “doe hunts” of 1956, the resulting large kill of deer did which of the following:

- A. Reduced pressure on heavily browsed deer range so more fawns could survive and produce more bucks and does.
- B. Resulted four years later in the largest deer harvest on record in California.
- C. Was called “criminal” and a “slaughter” and resulted in legislation that presently gives 37 California counties the authority to veto proposed antlerless hunts.
- D. Has restricted, even to this day, the number of antlerless deer hunts in much of California’s most important deer range.
- E. All of the above.

If you think you’re being set up, you’re right, because the answer is E, “all of the above.” Today, 46 years after the much maligned ‘56 hunt,

there is unanimity among wildlife biologists in the DFG that the 1956 either-sex deer hunt, which occurred during the last three days of the early and late seasons, was both a biologists’ success and a sociological setback.

It began innocently enough with petitions signed by hundreds of people who agreed with a herd survey by the

**“In 1959 and 1960...California hunters experienced the highest two-year buck harvest on record.”**

University of California that found swelling populations of deer doing increasing damage to their range, resulting in death by starvation and disease in many herds.

As a result, all or parts of 35 counties were opened to the take of one

deer of either sex by those with unfilled tags during the last three days of the early season and late deer season.

For the entire ‘56 season within the special doe-hunt counties, reported killed was 44,574 bucks and 38,081 does, for a reported total of 82,655 deer. The statewide deer kill that year was 108,452, of which 38,081 were does. By comparison, the average annual deer kill for the previous five years was 68,763, about 4,000 of which were does.

In 1957, one year after the hunt, the statewide buck kill hit 65,214, the fourth highest on record in California. The three high doe kill counties in the state during the 1956 hunt—Lassen, Modoc and Siskiyou—recorded a total kill of 11,682 bucks in 1957, a 23 percent improvement over the previous five-year average.

By comparison, Humboldt, Mendocino, Lake, Sonoma and Marin counties, which had been left out of the ‘56 either-sex shoot, re-

corded a total buck kill of 8,233 in 1957, 21 percent below the previous five-year average.

But, the best was yet to come, for this reason: any herd that experiences significant reductions in adult deer numbers in an environment of stable habitat will strive to fill the voids by producing more fawns that survive to adulthood.

One to two years later, of course, the fawns become adults—roughly half of which are does and half are bucks.

In 1959 and 1960, when improved fawn survival did, in fact, translate into more adult deer, California hunters experienced the highest two-year buck harvest on record at 149,067.

With the exception of 1956, the 1960 season by itself resulted in the state's highest total deer kill at

### **“The lingering social effects continue to haunt the DFG.”**

84,421 and a near record-tying buck kill of 75,584.

The 1956 reported kill figure of 108,452 deer was, no doubt, well below the actual kill. Crippling loss surely took some deer. And hunters reported seeing others who shot and left deer during the three-day “frenzy” reported in localized areas.

These unsportsmanlike scenes angered the public and led to the legislation establishing hunting “units” and providing veto power over antlerless hunts—authority that counties still have today.

The lingering social effects of the ‘56 doe hunt—still criticized today by some hunters who were not yet born in 1956—continue to haunt the DFG and, worse, sound deer management.

Although today's statewide zone hunting system gives the DFG the ability to tightly control a deer harvest to prevent a repeat of the per-

<b>2002/2003 Antlerless/Either-Sex Deer Hunts</b>	
<b>Either-Sex Hunts</b>	
<b>Hunt</b>	<b>County</b>
G7	Yuba
G10	San Diego
G11	Santa Barbara
G12	Butte/Sutter
G19	Yuba/Sutter
M6	San Diego
M7	Ventura
MA1	San Luis Obispo
J1	Sonoma
J7	Alpine
J8	Yuba
J9	Butte
J10	Monterey
J11	San Bernardino
J13	Los Angeles
J14	Riverside
J16	Butte, Colusa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sierra, Sutter, Yuba
J17	Colusa, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sutter, Yolo, Yuba
J18	Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus
J19	Lassen, Nevada, Plumas, Sierra
J20	Nevada, Placer, Sierra
A22	San Diego
A24	Monterey
A25	Sonoma
A31	Los Angeles
A32	Los Angeles, Ventura
<b>Antlerless Hunts</b>	
<b>Hunt</b>	<b>County</b>
G8	Monterey
G9	San Luis Obispo
G13	San Diego

ceived “free-for-all” hunt of 1956, the political obstacles for such hunts remain firmly in place.

According to several DFG deer biologists, antlerless hunts could be implemented in many places without any noticeable biological effect. The problem is convincing the local boards of supervisors. Preparing the biological data necessary to propose these hunts amounts to a huge workload that, in the end, accomplishes nothing but antagonistic relationships between the DFG and local governments. Many of these hunts go “unproposed.”

Still, progress is being made on the political side. For the 2002/2003 hunting season, the DFG proposed 26 either-sex and three antlerless hunts in 28 California counties, 19 of which have veto authority. Six of the hunts occur on military lands not subject to the veto law. Only two counties, Glenn and Tuolumne, vetoed the proposed junior hunts—J16 and J18. The DFG modified the hunt area descriptions to exclude those counties, so that the hunts will still occur.

*Paul Wertz is a DFG information officer in the Region 1 office.*

# Drawing Points are Here!

**F**or the first time this year the DFG will award points to applicants who are unsuccessful in California's big game drawing.

During the next several months, the Fish and Game Commission will evaluate various big game tag drawing methods with the goal of adopting a new point-based drawing method in time for the 2003-2004 hunting season. In anticipation of a drawing system, the DFG will award one point to unsuccessful applicants for premium deer (based on first choice, one deer tag application), pronghorn antelope, elk and bighorn sheep tags in the 2002 Big Game Draw.

Various drawing methods have been used in other states, including Bonus Points, Preference Points, Modified Preference Points, and the Draw-by-Choice system currently used in California. Success of applicants in these kinds of drawings is primarily based on their points relative to other applicants. There are subtle differences between the various drawing methods, which could significantly influence the chance of being drawn for your favorite deer zone or once-in-a-lifetime hunt. Interested hunters should become familiar with the pros and cons associated with each method.

Keep in mind that the Fish and Game Commission has not se-

lected a particular method for 2003, or determined which big game species will be included in the new drawing method. Specific details and procedures need to be established (for example: how party applications are processed, how points are gained or lost, and whether points are tracked by specific hunts or by species). Public input is very important in the Commission's decision-making process, and you are encouraged to contact the Commission with recommendations, comments or questions. As the Commission evaluates various drawing methods, periodic status reports will be provided.

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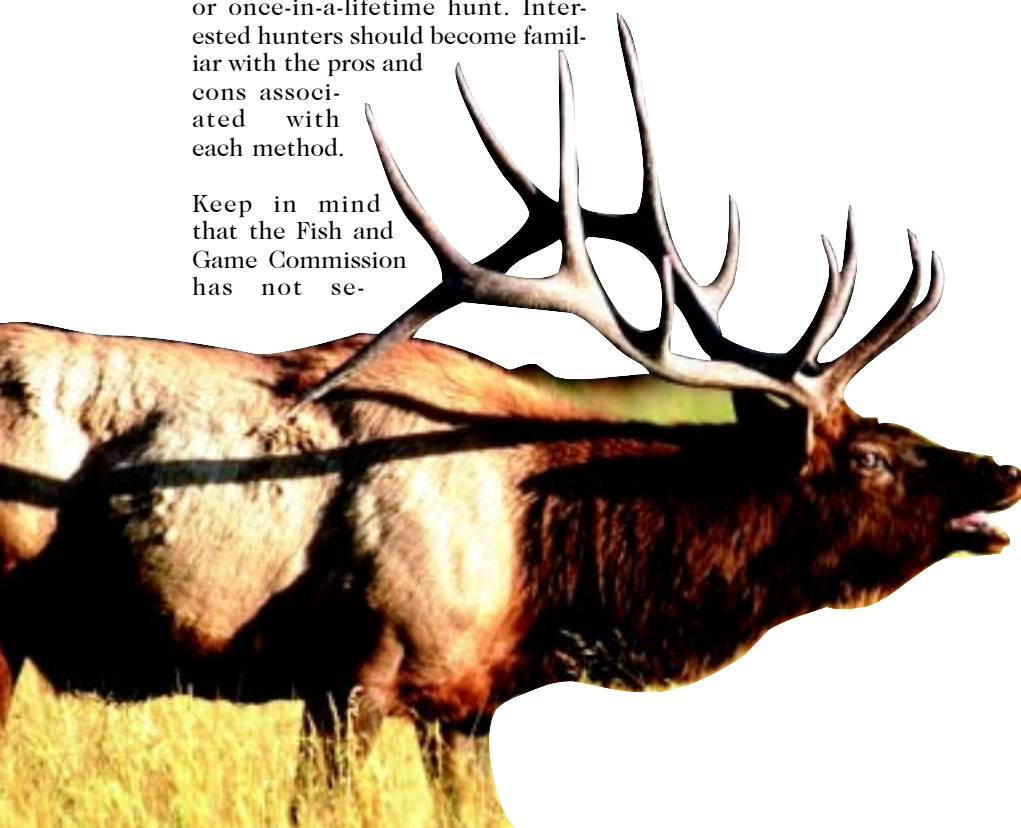
## Which Draw Method is Preferable?

**Bonus Points:** Each applicant is assigned a random number for each bonus point accrued. Successful applicants are selected based on lowest random numbers. The lower your lowest random number is, the better your chances of being selected. This method is easy to understand, rewards hunters for persistence, and still provides an opportunity for first-time applicants to be drawn. However this method can take hunters a long time to get drawn and does not provide predictability of when an applicant may be drawn (exceptionally unlucky hunters may never get drawn).

**Preference Points:** All tags are awarded to those with the most preference points. This system awards tags only to those hunters who have waited the longest. This system does not favor first-time applicants and those re-entering the draw.

**Modified Preference Points:** Under this method, a portion of the tags for each hunt is awarded through a preference point drawing, while the remaining portion is awarded through a random drawing. This method rewards hunters for persistence, but also provides an opportunity for first-time applicants. It is more complicated, and the wait for high-demand hunts can be longer than through a pure preference point system. This method also requires some type of split in tag quotas (e.g. 60% preference point : 40% random draw), which could be controversial.

**Draw-by-Choice:** This is the current drawing method for premium deer tags (essentially, it's also the method for elk, pronghorn antelope and bighorn sheep tags in California). Points are not awarded to unsuccessful applicants. All applications are sorted based on the hunter's first choice zone. Random numbers are assigned and tags are awarded based on lowest random numbers, until quotas are filled or all applications have been processed. For premium deer tags, if a given hunt quota is not filled and all first-choice applications have been processed, then remaining applications are sorted by second and third choice until hunts are filled or all applications are processed.



# Frequently Asked Questions About Drawing Points

**Question:** *If I am unable to go hunting in 2002, can I still enter the drawing to earn a point?*

**Answer:** Yes. Hunters can purchase a 2002/2003 hunting license and an application, then apply for the drawing by writing "POINT" as their first tag choice. The computer will consider this an invalid hunt code but the hunter will still receive a point.

**Question:** *How/when will I find out if I earned a point?*

**Answer:** All applicants for premium deer tag drawings receive drawing results (unsuccessful drawing notices, refund notices or tags) by late June. However, written confirmation of point status will not be provided until after the Fish and Game Commission adopts the new drawing method and more detailed requirements for accruing points. Point status will most likely be included with individual drawing renewal packets in April 2003.

**Question:** *If I enter the drawing for a premium deer tag or another big game tag but my application is rejected, do I still receive a point?*

**Answer:** Everyone who enters the drawing will receive a point except:

1. Applicant too young (date of birth shows he/she turns 12 after drawing deadline);
2. Multiple applications of the same type submitted by one individual;
3. Person submitting last year's deer tag application;
4. Application received after the deadline (5 p.m., June 3, 2002);
5. Big game tag applicant sends insufficient processing fee or no fee.

Under the circumstances listed above, applicants will not receive a point.

**Question:** *How can a junior hunter earn a point if he/she applies for an*

*over-the-counter tag on a one-deer tag application but applies through the drawing for a Junior Deer Hunt (Additional Hunt) on a second-deer tag application? (Example: Juniors may apply with friends or family for C zone tags on a one-deer tag application to ensure a tag is issued immediately on request, instead of applying for a C zone tag on a second-deer tag application which must be held for issuance until Aug. 2 only if C zone tags are still available.)*

**Answer:** Regulations allow points only for juniors unsuccessful in receiving their first tag choice on a one-deer tag application. There are no provisions for awarding points to juniors applying unsuccessfully for Junior Deer Hunts on a second-deer tag application.

**Question:** *If I don't get drawn for deer, and I request a refund of my tag fee, do I still earn a point?*

**Answer:** Yes—in 2002 only. In future years, a nonrefundable "drawing fee" may be proposed for deer. Application fees for other big game species are non-refundable.

**Question:** *What if I get drawn for a big game tag but I decide not to use it? Can I receive a point instead?*

**Answer:** Only if the tag is returned before the opening day for that hunt. Applicants or alternates who pay for and receive a tag, and who do not return the tag prior to the opening day for that hunt, will NOT receive a point.

**Question:** *I was drawn for a buck antelope tag within the past 10 years. Can I apply for, and receive, a point for a buck antelope tag before my 10-year waiting period is up?*

**Answer:** No. Under current regulations, you cannot reapply until the 10-year waiting period is over.



# Santa Cruz Island Wild Pig Hunt: “Like Winning the Lotto”

by Richard E. Satchell

Being picked at random for the special wild pig hunt on Santa Cruz Island was a very pleasant surprise. My deer hunting partner, Jerry Koger, had submitted our names after reading of the announcement in the winter 2001 issue of *Tracks*. Being in the first group of 12 hunters out of the 120 chosen to partake in this adventure was like winning the Lotto and a hunt of a lifetime all wrapped into one—especially for Jerry, as it was his first wild pig hunt.

We received letters of congratulations and instructions on Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> informing us that we would be leaving on March 18<sup>th</sup> to participate in the first hunt period. This set in motion a month of activity and preparation for making the weight restriction of 50 pounds, including hunting rifle and 60-quart cooler, for the three days and two nights on the island. The restriction was for two reasons: one, we were flying to the island; and two, we had to pack out everything we took in, very similar to a wilderness backpacking trip. Everything had to be as compact as possible for the flight to the island.

With a cold spring storm hitting the area on Sunday night, there was concern over whether the flights to the island would be canceled but, as the weatherman predicted, the storm moved on, leaving beautiful clear cold weather in its wake. Flying out of Camarillo Airport on Channel Islands Aviation, the 12 of us met at 8 a.m. Monday morning to board the twin engine Brittan Norman Islander aircraft. The flight to Santa Cruz Island was an adventure in itself. My partner, Jerry, had another first time experience; being chosen to fly in the right cockpit seat. Flying over the island he asked the pi-

lot, “where are you going to set us down?” The pilot pointed to a very small strip of grass in a valley ahead of us. I think I noticed a few white knuckles about that time. Setting down was smooth and uneventful as expected.

After unloading our gear, we were met by DFG wildlife biologist Scott Sewell and his team, who gave us a

**“Where are you going to set us down?” The pilot pointed to a very small strip of grass.**

medical facility on the island and it would take up to three hours to get a flight from the mainland.

Each team was then packed into a vehicle for transportation to their hunting area. We were the first to be dropped off. Our area was about five square miles of grassy rolling hills with deep valleys and steep mountains, if we wanted to walk that far. By noon our camp was established and our number one concern, finding water, became the priority. There was running water in most of the canyons, but it was in small pools. It had to be filtered and purified, then humped a half mile back to camp. Settling down for lunch, I



briefing on hunter safety and how we were to conduct ourselves as guests of The Nature Conservancy. Hunting teams of two were formed for those who did not come with a partner, and we were given a quick lesson on using the Global Positioning System and walkie-talkie radios that were issued to each hunting party. Again Scott stressed safety. If you became injured there was no

spotted our first pigs about 300 yards up the hill from camp, rooting in a grassy area.

Grabbing our rifles, we circled the hill so we could approach them from down wind. Stalking to about what I thought was 100 yards we settled in to take the first shot. At this time Boar Fever hit and we both missed our shots. They looked farther away

than they actually were, and we had over-shot them. Getting a good idea as to where in the canyon they had gone, we started our stalk. At about 300 yards into the canyon, a nice black boar busted out of the brush and up the side. I was able to stop this one, but as luck would have it, it rolled all the way back down into the bottom of the ravine. At about 180 pounds, it was a job getting it out. As there were no trees in the area to hang the animal, I caped the boar and used the hide to quarter and bone the meat. It had been stressed that there would be no wanton waste of the animals that were taken.

While I was field dressing my animal, Jerry had proceeded to hunt about a half a mile east of me. I soon heard the bark of his rifle. He had gotten his first wild boar. Finishing up my work, I headed back to camp before darkness set in. As I crested the hill a few yards from camp, an-

### **We settled in to take the first shot. At this time Boar Fever hit ...**

other nice boar appeared at about 70 yards from me. I took it with a nice shoulder shot and it stayed put. Now we had two animals besides the one on my back to get back to camp before dark. Since my animal was the closest to camp, Jerry helped me drag it back and hang it from a fence post to keep it cool. By this time my 65-year-old body was telling my 23-year-old mind it was time to quit for the evening. Since Jerry's boar was way up on the hill, we decided to mark it and pick it up in the morning. With temperatures dropping into freezing, we did not have to worry about spoilage.

Rising early Tuesday, we took care of my boar first and then made the hike up to Jerry's boar. No wonder he was proud; it had to have been one of the larger wild pigs. It was probably over 200 pounds—a very nice specimen for a first time take. He also got his first taste of skinning an animal that had a hide al-



*Opposite page: Hunters touching down on the Santa Cruz Island "runway." Above: The first group of hunters ready for their two day adventure.*

*Right: Richard E. Satchell with his quarry, a 225-pound boar.*



most an eighth of an inch thick and dulled a knife in just minutes.

Hunting the rest of the morning without seeing any sign, we gave up for some rest and lunch. Watching the hills as we ate, I again spotted two black spots on the horizon which faded in and out of sight. Hiking up and around the hill to approach down wind, we got into a sounder of about a dozen wild pigs. Jerry got a round off first, scattering the group. My first round missed but the second round dropped my animal. Jerry's next round took his animal down. Our work was cut out for us again.

As late afternoon fell, we decided to try the canyon where we busted the sounder earlier. We had no sooner reached the edge when a nice black boar busted out of the under brush. Jerry dropped it in its tracks. At that time another large boar busted out about 125 yards above us. I dropped it on my second shot. This one had the courtesy to roll all the way down the canyon almost to my feet. Being told that the average size of the pigs on the island would be about 150 pounds, we were surprised that most of the boars we harvested went well above that on the hoof.

Wednesday morning, the end of our fabulous hunt, came much too soon. Camp had to be taken down by 8:30 when our ride was scheduled to arrive. We also had to make a conscientious effort to be sure we left our camp site in the same condition as we had found it, as if we had not been there. Our aircraft was on time and by noon all 12 of us were back on the mainland and we were loading our seven pigs into the truck for the trip home.

This hunt would not have been possible if not for the DFG and The Nature Conservancy. Their hard work and planning made this a memorable hunt for those of us who were lucky enough to go. I can only hope that there will be other opportunities to partake in a DFG hunt of such high caliber.

*Richard E. Satchell, a freelance writer, was chosen at random to participate in the Santa Cruz Island wild pig hunt.*

# California's 2001 Wild Pig Harvest

by Cris Langner

The wild pig hunting season extends from July 1, through June 30, with no daily possession or seasonal bag limit. Here's a rundown of the 2000/2001 season. As reported from the DFG License and Revenue Branch, a total of 213,226 tags were sold, which included 42,273 resident tag books of five, and 1,861 nonresident single tags, a slight increase from last year. Hunters voluntarily reported taking 6,391 wild pigs by returning their harvest report tags to the DFG.

As usual, the Central Coast Region was responsible for the highest percentage of the total pig take, at 61 percent. This area seems to be the preferred habitat for wild pigs in California and for the past 10 years has been responsible for an average of 69 percent of the total pig harvest. Although the Central Coast Region remains the leader in the number of pigs killed per year, the percentage of the overall pig take has been on a downward trend (see table at right). On the other hand, a couple of other regions have seen a steady increase in the number of pigs taken. The San Joaquin Valley and Southern Sierra Region saw a slight increase from last year and was second in numbers of pigs killed, with 1,231 (19.3 percent).

The success rates for particular hunting methods are as follows: hunters using rifles accounted for the largest proportion of the harvest again this year with 89 percent (5,693) of the take. Archery hunters, though few and far between, took 284 pigs which accounted for 4.4 percent of the total harvest. All other hunting methods accounted for only 6.6 percent (414) of the take. This year 7.8 percent (496) of pig hunters used trailing hounds and 29.9 percent (1,910) hunted within their county of residence.

Of the total reported pigs taken, a total of 3,462 (54.2 percent) were males and 2,782 (43.5 percent) were females. Similar to years past, most pigs (91.8 percent) were reportedly taken on private land with the remaining 8 percent taken on public lands. After analyzing the returned pig tags, many places that are probably public lands have been erroneously reported as private land. Private land is defined as any parcel of land that is held in ownership by either a private citizen, like a ranch, or a private organization. The United States Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the California Department of Fish and Game are all public entities, and although some of the lands they administer

are restricted or have limited access—such as military installations, wildlife areas and preserves, they are still public lands. To improve the quality of data obtained from the pig tags it is necessary for hunters to be aware of where they are hunting. For a guide to hunting wild pigs on public lands, please contact the DFG at 916-653-4263 for a free *Guide to Hunting Wild Pigs in California*.

*Cris Langner is a scientific aide in the DFG Wild Pig and Black Bear programs who compiles and analyzes data from license tags.*



*Mike McKeever took this wild boar at Bighorn Ranch in Cherry Valley.*

## Wild Pig Take 1994-2001 (Reported from Wild Pig License Tags)

County	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01
<b>Northern California - North Coast Region</b>							
Humboldt	32	33	26	43	30	20	9
Modoc	1	0	0	0	3	0	0
Shasta	22	33	22	53	55	84	62
Siskiyou	8	12	12	21	17	8	4
Tehama	284	265	268	380	493	398	451
Trinity	17	14	21	23	8	16	34
Region Total	364	357	349	520	606	526	560
% of Statewide Harvest	7.9	6.8	7.5	9.4	7.8	8.91	8.8
<b>Sacramento Valley - Central Sierra Region</b>							
Amador	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Butte	2	0	1	0	1	2	2
Calaveras	3	2	3	6	2	1	11
Colusa	34	76	73	151	117	64	105
El Dorado	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Glenn	21	26	23	51	67	60	114
Nevada	5	7	4	17	9	7	15
Placer	0	2	6	2	3	0	10
Sacramento	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
San Joaquin	10	21	13	25	60	29	26
Solano	16	36	26	30	49	40	49
Sutter	24	17	31	64	59	45	46
Yolo	1	4	3	4	19	11	14
Yuba	3	1	1	4	1	0	9
Region Total	119	193	184	355	388	259	403
% of Statewide Harvest	2.6	3.7	4.0	6.4	4.9	4.38	6.3
<b>Central Coast Region</b>							
Alameda	39	48	48	68	97	45	34
Contra Costa	5	8	6	9	21	15	13
Lake	56	43	33	42	47	28	17
Mendocino	371	339	291	299	286	164	205
Monterey	887	1011	935	1194	2063	1620	1881
Napa	83	80	75	66	65	24	16
San Benito	289	394	371	359	717	461	470
San Luis Obispo	467	600	529	522	544	541	512
San Mateo	1	1	0	1	6	4	24
Santa Clara	816	751	541	609	863	440	374
Santa Cruz	66	61	48	53	39	48	92
Sonoma	394	458	377	379	402	306	280
Region Total	3474	3794	3254	3601	5150	3696	3918
% of Statewide Harvest	75.2	72.4	70.1	65.1	65.8	62.58	61.3
<b>San Joaquin Valley - Southern Sierra Region</b>							
Fresno	100	160	161	270	241	208	190
Kern	20	44	89	143	319	487	570
Kings	6	6	3	5	3	27	30
Madera	14	33	30	30	21	36	74
Mariposa	40	53	61	72	51	54	76
Merced	36	41	33	50	138	101	79
Stanislaus	75	154	143	183	303	103	119
Tulare	58	71	104	90	97	64	93
Tuolumne	2	2	0	0	6	1	0
Region Total	351	564	624	843	1179	1180	1231
% of Statewide Harvest	7.6	10.8	13.4	15.2	15.1	18.3	19.3
<b>South Coast Region</b>							
Los Angeles	43	54	28	12	89	46	22
San Diego	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Santa Barbara	226	254	189	185	337	247	230
Ventura	6	7	1	5	7	12	6
Region Total	275	315	219	202	433	305	258
% of Statewide Harvest	5.9	6.0	4.7	3.7	5.5	5.16	4.0
<b>Eastern Sierra - Inland Deserts Region</b>							
Riverside	30	9	7	7	19	17	5
San Bernardino	2	1	1	3	5	2	4
Unknown	2	6	5	2	43	20	10
Region Total	34	16	13	12	67	39	19
% of Statewide Harvest	0.8	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.9	0.67	0.3
<b>Statewide Total</b>	<b>4617</b>	<b>5239</b>	<b>4643</b>	<b>5533</b>	<b>7823</b>	<b>5906</b>	<b>6391</b>

# DFG Announces

## Tracks Subscribers: We Need To Hear From You!

Our mailing list is growing... and that's a good thing. But we want to make sure we're only sending *Tracks* to those who want it.

If you subscribed more than a year ago, and you'd like to remain on our mailing list, ***we need to hear from you*** to avoid an interruption in your subscription. Our next issue of *Tracks*, the Summer 2002 upland game issue, will be mailed only to those we hear from. This will allow us to keep our postage costs down while continuing to provide our readers with a high-quality publica-

tion. (Those who requested *Tracks* within the last year will not be removed from the mailing list.)

To remain on the mailing list, simply send a post card or an email to:

DFG Tracks Renewal  
1416 Ninth Street #1240  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
or:  
pmontalv@dfg.ca.gov

Be sure to include your mailing address. As always, the subscription is free.

## Tracks Now An Award-Winning Publication

Long appreciated by California hunters and, most recently, anglers, *Tracks* has now been recognized by a professional association of public outreach professionals.

The 2001 big game issue of *Tracks* received an honorable mention at an annual awards competition hosted by the State Information Officers Council. It competed in the multi-color magazine category.

*Tracks* began as a small, subscription-based newsletter about deer hunting. In 2001 it expanded to a full-color quarterly magazine focusing on all aspects of hunting and fishing in California.

According to *Tracks* Editor Lorna Bernard, "Our wildlife and fisheries biologists have made public outreach a priority. Without their co-

operation and assistance, *Tracks* would not be possible."

The DFG full-color magazine *Outdoor California* earned the silver award in the same category—multi-color magazine. *Outdoor California's* annual wildlife photo contest is the source of many of the beautiful color photos that appear in *Tracks*. For subscription information, contact editor Alexia Retallack at aretalla@dfg.ca.gov or visit <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/coned/ocal/outdoorcal.html>.



*Tracks* Editor Lorna Bernard with the State Information Officers Council award.

## Hunting/Fishing Regulation Schedule

Every year the California Fish and Game Commission prints seven regulation booklets covering fishing, hunting and wildlife area regulations. The booklets go into production as soon as the regulations are approved.

Below is a list of scheduled publication dates for each booklet, as well as the "early bird flyer" which is a summary of upland game regulations. The "early bird flyer" is intended to fill the gap between the time the resident upland game regulations are approved and the release of the 24-page booklet.

Sport Fishing	Jan. 15
Ocean Salmon	May 14
Mammals	May 14
Inland Salmon	June 18
Early Bird Flyer	Aug. 13
Resident/Upland Game	Sept. 11
State/Federal Areas	Sept. 11
Waterfowl	Oct. 1

## Hunter Education

For a list of hunter education classes in your area, call one of the telephone numbers listed below. A list of certified hunter education classes is also available on the DFG home page, at: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/huntered>.

Northern California/North Coast:  
(530) 225-2003

Sacramento Valley/Central Sierra:  
(916) 351-0833

Central Coast:  
(707) 944-5576

San Joaquin Valley/Southern Sierra:  
(209) 243-4027

Southern California/Eastern Sierra:  
(562) 590-5670

# Bighorn Sheep Hunting: Win-Win For Hunters, Species

by Andy Pauli

After 15 years, California's sheep hunting program continues to be very successful. Starting in 1987 with two hunt zones, the program has steadily expanded; six zones will be open for hunting this year. Tag numbers are very limited and in great demand; California hunters submit approximately 5,000 applications each year for bighorn sheep tags. Cumulatively, hunter success has been excellent at almost 90 percent, but hunters need to be aware that some zones are difficult to access (for example: San Gorgonio Wilderness and Sheep Hole Mountains). Other zones (such as the Sheep Hole Mountains) can be difficult

to hunt in some years. The table below provides hunter success rates for all sheep zones since 1987. Applicants interested in getting more information about hunting conditions for each zone should contact DFG Wildlife Biologist Andy Pauli at (760) 240-1372.

The Department's tremendously successful sheep management program is attributed to the dedication of both professionals and volunteers alike. As a result of successful management, a conservative hunting program can be sustained well into the future.

## Bighorn Sheep Hunter Success 1987-2001

Year	Marble Mtns.		Old Dad/ Kelso		Kingston/ Clark		Chocolate Mtns.		Orocopia Mtns.		San Gorgonio Mtns.		Sheephole Mtns.	
1987	4/4	100%	5/5	100%										
1988	2/4	50%	5/5	100%										
1989	3/3	100%	6/6	100%										
1990	2/2	100%	4/4	100%										
1991	2/3	67%	5/5	100%										
1992	3/3	100%	5/5	100%	4/4	100%								
1993	2/3	67%	4/4	100%	3/4	75%								
1994	1/2	50%	4/4	100%	1/3	33%	4/4	100%						
1995	0/2	0%	5/5	100%	3/3	100%	6/6	100%						
1996	0/1	0%	2/3	67%	0/2	0%	3/3	100%	3/4	75%	1/1	100%		
1997	3/3	100%	3/3	100%	1/1	100%	1/1	100%	1/1	100%	2/2	100%		
1998	2/2	100%	2/2	100%	3/3	100%	No Hunt		1/1	100%	1/1	100%		
1999	2/2	100%	3/3	100%	4/4	100%	No Hunt		1/1	100%	1/1	100%		
2000	3/3	100%	2/2	100%	1/1	100%	No Hunt		1/1	100%	1/1	100%	2/2	100%
2001	2/2	100%	4/4	100%	1/2	50%	No Hunt		1/1	100%	3/3	100%	0/1	0%
<b>Statewide Hunter Success</b> <b>144/161 = 89% (does not include results from four unfilled fund-raising tags)</b>														

## Bighorn Sheep Management Program Revenue

Year	Fund-Raising Tag Revenue	Drawing Tag License Fees	Total Revenue
1987	\$70,000	\$21,930	\$91,930
1988	\$59,000	\$18,525	\$77,525
1989	\$40,000	\$17,525	\$57,525
1990	\$37,000	\$13,955	\$50,955
1991	\$42,000	\$15,570	\$57,570
1992	\$61,000	\$22,464	\$83,464
1993	\$100,000	\$25,082	\$125,082
1994	\$162,000	\$28,422	\$190,422
1995	\$187,000	\$26,312	\$213,312
1996	\$193,500	\$28,702	\$222,202
1997	\$84,000	\$26,836	\$110,836
1998	\$150,000	\$32,588	\$182,588
1999	\$95,000	\$34,120	\$129,120
2000	\$76,000	\$36,288	\$112,288
2001	\$148,000	\$40,539	\$188,539
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,504,500</b>	<b>\$388,859</b>	<b>\$1,893,359</b>



# California's 2001 Bear Harvest

by Cris Langner

Once again, another successful black bear hunting season has come to a close. As in previous years, the season closed early when the DFG received 1,500 bear tags. Not since 1995 has the black bear season run to its designated close, but the new in-season closure has grown, from 1,500 to 1,700 bears. This will allow the season to run well into December, giving a few more hunters an opportunity to fill their tags. A regulation change in 2000 eliminated the quota on the number of bear tags sold, which increased tag sales only slightly in 2001. If the 2002 hunting season follows suit there should be about the same number of hunters but more bears taken.

A total of 1,633 black bears were reported taken in the 2001 season with the Northern California/North Coast Region responsible for the bulk of the harvested bears (see table at right). Trinity County reported the most bears taken, at 198. There are other areas of the state that are typically high in bear numbers, but often these areas go virtually unhunted. The national forest in El Dorado and Placer counties holds a large number of bears but accounted for only 6 percent of the total harvest. The eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada, including Inyo and Mono counties, has its share of bears but only 12 were taken from the area.

Success rates for the different hunting methods varied little in 2001 compared to previous years. Hunters us-

ing trailing dogs accounted for a little less than half the kills, taking 809 bears. This is down only slightly from last year. Deer hunters were responsible for about a third of the bears killed (596), with many hunters buying tags "just in case." Archery hunters were responsible for 91 bears killed this season, up about a half-percent from 2000, while the bears taken by hunters using guides decreased to only 93 bears.

Ninety-two percent of successful hunters and 4.5 percent of unsuccessful bear hunters indicated the number of days they spent hunting on their report cards. Successful hunters spent an average of 3.8 days and unsuccessful hunters an average of 7.7 days hunting bears, slightly higher than in 2000. A total of 281 successful bear hunters (17.2 percent) said they had taken bears on private land.

As of May 1, 2002, premolar teeth had been collected from 82 percent (1,344) of the bears. Information obtained from bear tooth analysis is largely responsible for management decisions (such as the quota increase) so it is crucial for hunters to turn in their bear skulls. Again in 2001 the general bear and deer seasons overlapped in the A, B, C, and D deer hunting zones, while the X zones opened October 13<sup>th</sup>. But good news for you southern X zone hunters: zones X8 through X12 will now be opening with the general bear season. Good luck in 2002.



**Boone & Crockett Bear:**  
Oakley resident Gene Haney took this bear in Siskiyou County. It stood 6'6" and weighed approximately 600 pounds, earning a "green" score of 19 15/16 in the Boone and Crockett Club Records of North American Big Game.

**Pope & Young Bear:**  
 Archer Richard E. Bronson of Simi Valley harvested this California black bear near Bridgeport. Field dressed, it tipped the scales at 325 pounds. The bear scored 19 1/16 inches in the Pope & Young Club Records Program.



### 2001 Black Bear Take

County	Males	Females	Total	County	Males	Females	Total
<b>Region 1</b>				<b>Region 4</b>			
Del Norte	11	7	18	Fresno	51	27	78
Humboldt	52	58	110	Kern	52	33	85
Lassen	3	10	13	Madera	25	21	46
Modoc	2	1	3	Mariposa	26	9	35
Shasta	61	43	104	Stanislaus	1	0	1
Siskiyou	63	41	104	Tulare	73	57	130
Tehama	51	28	79	Tuolumne	45	21	66
Trinity	116	82	198	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>441</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>Percent of Take</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>27.0%</b>
<b>Percent of Take</b>	<b>22.0%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>	<b>38.5%</b>	<b>Region 5</b>			
<b>Region 2</b>				Los Angeles	9	6	16*
Alpine	2	3	5	Santa Barbara	10	6	16
Amador	0	0	0	Ventura	13	8	21
Butte	23	16	39	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>53</b>
Calaveras	10	7	17	<b>Percent of Take</b>	<b>2.0 %</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
Colusa	1	1	2	<b>Region 6</b>			
El Dorado	36	25	61	Inyo	2	0	2
Glenn	11	7	18	Mono	6	4	10
Nevada	9	8	17	Riverside	0	2	2
Placer	20	17	37	San Bernardino	16	7	23
Plumas	46	36	82	Unknown	2	2	4
Sierra	15	19	34	<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>41</b>
Yolo	0	0	0	<b>Percent of Take</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
Yuba	3	5	8	<b>Statewide Totals</b>			
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>320</b>		<b>953</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>1,633</b>
<b>Percent of Take</b>	<b>10.8%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>	<b>19.6%</b>	<b>Statewide Percent of Take</b>	<b>58.3%</b>	<b>41.6%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Region 3</b>				<i>*Sex of one harvested bear not indicated on tag.</i>			
Lake	14	13	27				
Mendocino	73	49	122				
San Luis Obispo	0	0	0				
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>149</b>				
<b>Percent of Take</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>				

# Ask A Biologist

by David O. Smith

**Question:** I read with great interest the 'Ask a Biologist' column in Tracks—Summer 2001. The theory that if 50 adult deer die they will be replaced by 50 deer of which 25 will be bucks, 25 does has me a bit puzzled. This makes perfect sense if carrying capacity is reached or in the mountain states or eastern Sierra where winters are tough. However in the balance of the state I have a hard time believing we are at carrying capacity. If I am correct and as you state 60-90 percent of fawns die their first year I contend that we need more fawns. To get more fawns we need more does. To have more does we *do not* need doe hunts. Am I missing something? Is my logic flawed? Thanks for your help.

**Answer:** Your contention that “we need more does to produce more fawns” to increase our deer herds seems logical but we should examine some basic deer reproduction biology. This will get a little “number crazy” but I don’t know any other way. Let’s talk fetal rates. Fetal rates are commonly described as the number of fetuses per 100 does in a population. A good average is 150 fawns for every 100 does. By the way, when deer are below the carrying capacity of their habitat (more than enough forage to go around) the fetal rate will increase. Why? Because when there is less competition for forage, deer are in better condition and they produce more fawns, and more of them will survive to become adults. When there are too many deer for the available food, fawn production declines. How does this happen? Reproductive processes such as age at first breeding, ovulation rates, conception rates are largely determined by nutrition. Protein, fats, carbohydrates, all determine the reproductive rates of deer and survival of fawns. Not much different than us humans. Diet determines the outcome of the reproductive process. Think of the balance between the number of deer and the available food as a “thermostat” that turns on reproduction and survival of fawns when available food per deer is high and turns it down when “times are tough.”

If annual mortality of adult does averages about 15 to 20 percent (we have learned this by monitoring the losses of radio collared deer) each year, then the population can be maintained over time when about only 35 of the 150 fawns per every 100 does survives their first year to become yearlings (replacements for the adults that died). But wait! Every 100 does produced 150 fawns and we only need 30 to 35 of those 150 to survive the first year to maintain the herd? That means that up to 120 of the 150 die! That’s up to 80 percent loss! Mother Nature gives up her young first. She has to give them up; there’s no room.



New fawns are lousy competitors. High fawn losses are a symptom of a deer population that is at the carrying capacity of the habitat and the last thing needed is more does making more fawns. It can’t happen.

So, why hunt does? Because when deer are competing for forage and we remove more adults (a doe hunt) competition declines and “room” or “space” is made for more of the 150 fawns per 100 does to survive. The number of fawns per doe increases because there are fewer does. Fewer does produce fewer fawns but more of the fawns survive. We must take them out to allow them to be replaced.

I can’t resist using the infamous 1956 doe hunt as an example (see page 8). During the 1950s deer numbers in California were increasing and damage was occurring on critical deer ranges due to over utilization of browse plants. Deer numbers exceeded the habitat carrying capacity. In an effort to control the population increase, the California Fish and Game Commission approved the taking of any deer during the last four days of the regular deer season. Thousands of does were killed. Many sportsmen to this day maintain that this doe hunt decimated California’s deer herds. But what actually happened was that in 1957, biologists recorded some of the highest fawn per doe counts recorded in many years. Yes, there were fewer does but because the herd was reduced, the remaining does produced a large fawn crop. Why? Because there was room for them.! In 1959, one half of the fawns produced in 1957 became 2-year-old bucks. In 1960, the harvest consisted of a large percentage of 3-year-olds. You guessed it! California’s record two year buck kill.

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# Ask A Warden

by Lt. Liz Schwall



**Question:** Are expandable broadhead arrows legal to use in California?

**Answer:** Yes, if they meet the size requirements. To be legal for use on big game, arrow heads must not be able to pass through a hole that is seven-eighths inch in diameter. In the case of expandable broadheads, the seven-eighths inch requirement refers to the arrow head in the CLOSED position. The expandable head must not be able to pass through a seven-eighths inch hole while the arrow is in flight (before impact).

**Question:** I have read in the regulations that when hunting resident small game, game birds or waterfowl with a shotgun, the gun must not be able to hold more than three shells. Would this also be the case if I were to hunt coyotes with a shotgun?

**Answer:** The three-shell maximum does not apply to shotguns used to take nongame species such as coyotes. However, Fish and Game Code section 2010 states that "it is unlawful to use or possess any shotgun capable of holding more than six cartridges to take *any* mammal or bird." So, when hunting for nongame species, your shotgun can hold no more than six shells.

**Question:** Last season, the local game warden came onto my friend's fenced property without permission to check our hunting licenses. My friend informed the warden that he was trespassing as he had not requested access to the property nor come in through the open gate from the public road which is a normal route for any visitor. Isn't there a law that protects land owners from just such a breach of privacy, or unconstitutional search? Doesn't the warden need to either ask for permission, have a search warrant or enter the property in pursuit of an active crime?

**Answer:** Game wardens do not need permission to enter onto private property where hunting or fishing activity is occurring *or* where they believe hunting or fishing activity is occurring. The warden who checked you had the right to enter onto the property where you were hunting. Wardens are not obligated to use open gates or "public" entry points.

Fish and Game Code Section 857(b)(2) specifically allows DFG peace officers (wardens) to enter onto private property for "law enforcement purposes." Hunting and fishing license compliance is one of the main law enforcement activities wardens do.

Consider this; there are less than 400 game wardens in California whose duty it is to patrol 158,000 square miles of terrain and 1,100 miles of coastline. The reality is that wardens are few and far between. Poaching is often a crime of secrecy and stealth, making it difficult to detect. Game wardens are already fighting an uphill battle. In order to be effective, it is imperative that they have access to public and private property.

**Question:** If a hunter wounds an animal, can he or she legally pursue that animal onto private property?

**Answer:** The provisions of the Fish and Game Code require hunters to make reasonable efforts to retrieve any wounded game. Failure to make a good faith effort at retrieval might constitute a "waste of game" violation. On the other hand, there is nothing in our Codes that authorizes any citizen to trespass upon private property without first obtaining permission from the landowner.

So the short answer to the question is "no," a hunter may not commit a trespass to follow wounded game. The practical answer to the question is that a hunter would attempt to find a way to legally access the property in order to retrieve the game. This would most likely include contacting the landowner for permission. In cases where the landowner is hostile toward hunters, local law enforcement (the sheriffs' office or DFG) should be called to mediate the situation.

Ideally, you (the ethical sportsman), will make every attempt to prevent the above scenario from happening. Close range, well-placed shots resulting in clean, quick kills go a long way in preventing this type of situation.

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# Grown and Harvested



*Above: The Leal family had a great deer season in 2001; Phil and son Jim pose with Phil's 3 x 4 buck; Jim and John Leal each pose with a buck of their own. All were taken in Zone X6.*

*Left: 13-year old James Donnelly with his first buck.*

*Below: Mike McKeever from Anaheim and Glenn Norum from Fullerton took these boars at Bighorn Ranch in Cherry Valley.*



# in California



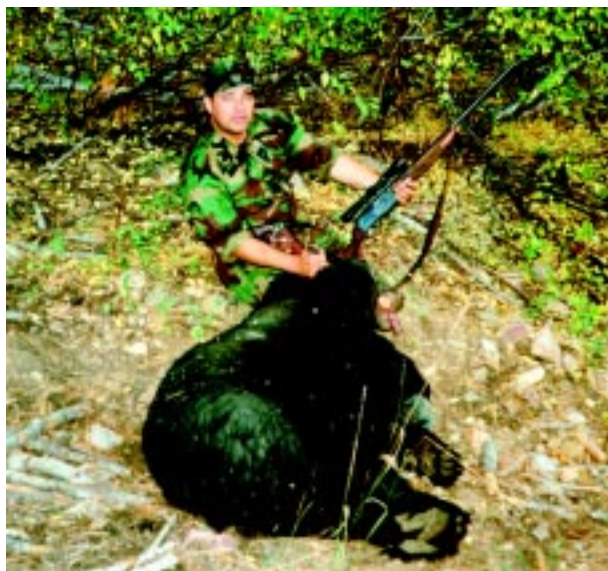
*Clockwise from top:*

*Chuck Ryan, pictured with brother Cal Ryan, took this 7 x 6 Roosevelt elk during the Klamath Bull hunt;*

*Jerry Koger took this wild pig during the Santa Cruz Island public hunt.*

*Archer Tim Knollhoff harvested this 250-pound bear in the X9A deer zone;*

*Gerardo Espinoza of Watsonville harvested this bear in Tulare County.*



# 2001 Deer Antler Class Statistics

The following table shows the total reported number and percent of forked horn-or-better bucks by antler class and zone or hunt. Data provided by Russ Mohr, associate wildlife biologist with DFG's deer program in Sacramento.

Zone or Hunt	2pt. Bucks	3 pt. Bucks	4 pt. Bucks	4+ pt. Bucks	Total Buck Kill	Zone or Hunt	2pt. Bucks	3 pt. Bucks	4 pt. Bucks	4+ pt. Bucks	Total Buck Kill
Archery Only 1*	60.7%	25.4%	10.7%	3.3%	122	Hunt A11	60.7%	25.0%	14.3%		28
Archery Only 2*	58.8%	24.4%	12.6%	4.2%	119	Hunt A12	50.0%	16.7%	33.3%		6
A Zone (South)	63.4%	26.5%	8.1%	1.2%	2,653	Hunt A13	44.4%	33.3%	11.1%	11.1%	9
A Zone (North)	54.8%	33.5%	10.2%	0.9%	2,382	Hunt A14	57.1%	42.9%			7
Zone B1	45.5%	33.5%	17.5%	2.2%	1,375	Hunt A15	50.0%		50.0%		2
Zone B2	54.1%	31.3%	12.5%	1.0%	1,350	Hunt A16	34.6%	42.3%	23.1%		26
Zone B3	47.6%	34.8%	13.9%	2.9%	273	Hunt A17	50.0%	50.0%			2
Zone B4	52.9%	31.6%	12.0%	2.7%	225	Hunt A18		50.0%	50.0%		2
Zone B5	54.4%	33.1%	10.8%	1.4%	353	Hunt A19	100.0%				1
Zone B6	49.1%	31.9%	16.1%	1.9%	633	Hunt A20	57.9%	26.3%	15.8%		19
Zone C1	47.5%	39.3%	11.8%	1.1%	280	Hunt A21	100.0%				2
Zone C2	48.9%	31.5%	16.3%	3.3%	184	Hunt A22	27.3%	45.5%	9.1%		11
Zone C3	51.2%	32.7%	13.2%	2.5%	281	Hunt A23					0
Zone C4	54.5%	32.4%	11.8%	1.1%	466	Hunt A24	75.0%				4
Zone D3	55.9%	27.0%	13.7%	3.3%	644	Hunt A25	16.7%	66.7%	16.7%		6
Zone D4	51.8%	27.3%	17.3%	2.9%	139	Hunt A26	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%	14.3%	7
Zone D5	53.7%	30.4%	12.5%	2.3%	1,095	Hunt A27		66.7%	33.3%		3
Zone D6	56.4%	27.3%	14.2%	1.7%	578	Hunt A30	50.0%		50.0%		2
Zone D7	58.5%	26.6%	11.1%	3.0%	576	Hunt A31	80.0%	6.7%		13.3%	15
Zone D8	60.0%	25.4%	12.3%	2.0%	350	Hunt G1	43.5%	34.6%	20.6%	1.3%	457
Zone D9	61.3%	24.2%	12.9%	1.6%	124	Hunt G3	10.5%	31.6%	52.6%	5.3%	19
Zone D10	57.4%	27.8%	14.8%		54	Hunt G6	35.7%	28.6%	35.7%		28
Zone D11	70.3%	17.9%	7.7%	1.5%	195	Hunt G7	100.0%				2
Zone D12	15.0%	45.0%	35.0%	5.0%	40	Hunt G8**					0
Zone D13	67.0%	24.1%	8.0%		224	Hunt G9					1
Zone D14	46.6%	32.9%	17.8%	2.1%	146	Hunt G10**					0
Zone D15	56.5%	34.8%	4.3%		23	Hunt G11	37.7%	26.4%	13.2%	1.9%	53
Zone D16	60.3%	33.3%	6.4%		141	Hunt G12	60.0%	40.0%			5
Zone D17	18.9%	37.8%	35.1%	8.1%	37	Hunt G13					5
Zone D19	61.8%	26.5%	7.4%		68	Hunt G19	50.0%	50.0%			2
Zone X1	53.0%	32.2%	13.6%	1.2%	404	Hunt G21		100.0%			2
Zone X2	41.1%	32.1%	25.0%	1.8%	56	Hunt G37	31.2%	31.2%	31.2%	6.2%	16
Zone X3a	41.8%	22.4%	32.1%	3.7%	134	Hunt G38	44.4%	27.8%	16.7%	5.6%	18
Zone X3b	37.1%	34.8%	24.6%	3.5%	256	Hunt M3	23.1%	53.8%	23.1%		13
Zone X4	43.7%	29.4%	22.2%	3.2%	126	Hunt M4		66.7%	33.3%		3
Zone X5a	19.5%	46.3%	34.1%		41	Hunt M5		16.7%	83.3%		6
Zone X5b	25.6%	45.1%	25.6%	3.7%	82	Hunt M6					2
Zone X6a	42.4%	35.9%	19.6%	2.2%	92	Hunt M7	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%		4
Zone X6b	34.6%	34.6%	25.9%	3.7%	81	Hunt M8	33.3%	66.7%			6
Zone X7a	41.3%	28.9%	24.8%	4.1%	121	Hunt M9	20.0%	30.0%	40.0%	10.0%	10
Zone X7b	31.6%	47.4%	18.4%	2.6%	38	Hunt M11	9.1%	27.3%	45.5%	9.1%	11
Zone X8	27.5%	51.0%	13.7%	7.8%	51	Hunt MA1	33.3%	66.7%			3
Zone X9a	39.7%	35.3%	22.8%	1.6%	184	Hunt MA3	57.1%	21.4%	14.3%	7.1%	14
Zone X9b	40.6%	50.0%	9.4%		32	Hunt J1		100.0%			3
Zone X9c	36.2%	39.7%	22.4%	1.7%	58	Hunt J3	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%		6
Zone X10	44.4%	33.3%	22.2%		9	Hunt J4	33.3%	22.2%	22.2%	22.2%	9
Zone X12	36.2%	33.9%	26.6%	2.8%	177	Hunt J7					0
Hunt A1	70.7%	19.5%	9.8%		41	Hunt J8	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%		3
Hunt A2	56.7%	24.2%	16.7%	2.5%	120	Hunt J9			100.0%		1
Hunt A3	50.0%	32.6%	13.0%	4.3%	46	Hunt J10**					0
Hunt A4	25.0%	25.0%	37.5%	12.5%	8	Hunt J11	33.3%	33.3%	16.7%		6
Hunt A5	33.3%		66.7%		6	Hunt J12		11.1%	66.7%	11.1%	9
Hunt A6	50.0%	50.0%			10	Hunt J13	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%		4
Hunt A7	50.0%	27.8%	11.1%	11.1%	18	Hunt J14	20.0%	60.0%		20.0%	5
Hunt A8				100.0%	1	Hunt J15	28.6%	14.3%	57.1%		7
Hunt A9		50.0%	50.0%		4	<b>STATEWIDE:</b>	<b>53.0%</b>	<b>30.7%</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>1.9%</b>	<b>18,215</b>

Table does not include unclassified or unreported buck kills, or kills on Private Lands Management (PLM) land, so totals do not add up to 100%.

\*Archery Only tag kill is separate and not included within individual zones.

\*\*Military Hunts G-8, G-10 and J-10 cancelled in 2001.